

Chapter No. 2139

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***SENATE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
No. 589***

Originated in Senate

Liz Walsh

Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 589

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE RECOGNITION OF THE MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE TO MISSISSIPPI NATIVE DR. WILLIAM R. (BILL) FERRIS AS RECIPIENT OF TWO GRAMMY AWARDS FOR BEST HISTORICAL ALBUM.

WHEREAS, Historian and Mississippi native William Ferris took home two Grammy Awards on February 9, 2019, for a retrospective of his work as a Mississippi Folklorist; and

WHEREAS, *Voices of Mississippi*, Artists and Musicians documented by William R. Ferris, won the Grammy Award for "Best Historical Album." The 120-page book that accompanied the recordings also received a Grammy for "Best Album Notes." A box set, *Voices of Mississippi* contains two discs of Ferris's blues and gospel recordings from the 1960s and 1970s, one disc of recorded stories and a DVD of documentaries he made in the 1970s and early 1980s; and

WHEREAS, Ferris, who grew up on his family's Warren County farm, began recording local blues and gospel music as a teenager in the 1950s, using a clunky reel-to-reel tape recorder. What has

compelled him to continue these recordings for six decades, he said, "was following (his) heart." Ferris said gospel music had been a big part of his life since the age of four, when he started attending Sunday services at a local Black church with a woman named Mary Gordon. When he was older, he said, he noticed the church had no hymnals. If the singers weren't there, he said it was like the music "would disappear." So Ferris said he felt a personal responsibility to preserve those services. He began with audio recordings and photographs, later moving on to filming the services. This work with gospel music grew into recording blues singers and storytellers; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Ferris, an Associate Director of the Center for the Study of the American South at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, has received a number of awards and accolades for his work with *Southern Folklore*, including a Pulitzer Prize nomination for co-editing the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. In the 1980s, Quincy Jones tapped Ferris to help compose the score for the film "The Color Purple." Ferris has written and edited 10 books and created 15 documentary films, most of which deal with African-American music and folklore from the Mississippi Delta. A graduate of Davidson College and a former Chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Ferris also founded the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at The University of Mississippi, where he taught for 18 years; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, the Governor's Arts Award Program included William R. (Bill) Ferris for the Lifetime Achievement Award. William R. Ferris has long been the preeminent scholar and documenter of Mississippi's rich culture, music and folklore. Born in Vicksburg in 1942, Dr. Ferris has been documenting the lives of Mississippians, often African-Americans, for more than 50 years. He is the younger brother of the late Senator Grey Ferris; and

WHEREAS, *Voices of Mississippi* covers three decades of Ferris's work and, as a result, he said, connects the otherwise disparate voices of musicians, artists and storytellers he has worked with over the years. It is important because it connects the dots of black and white men and women, like Eudora Welty, Alice Walker, as well as B.B King and Parchman inmates. "It is a broad spectrum of voices who, when you listen to them have a rich, textured musical expression of language," Ferris said. He said the Grammy is important because it brings these voices to a wider audience. "It is the pinnacle of recognition for the field of music, and it is especially important that musicians from Mississippi, who represent the roots of American music, are being recognized by the Grammy Awards. It helps us understand that the roots of blues and rock "n" roll and gospel and country music are all in Mississippi; and

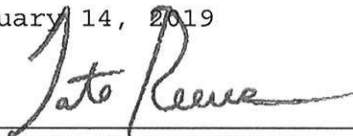
WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we pay tribute and express appreciation for the national recognition and

contributions of a Mississippi civic and cultural leader who has made Mississippi a better place and exemplifies the literary, artistic and cultural traditions of our great state:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby extend the recognition of the Mississippi Legislature to Dr. William R. (Bill) Ferris as recipient of two Grammy Awards for "Best Historical Album" and extend our congratulations on this auspicious occasion.

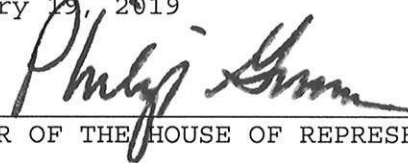
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Bill Ferris and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
February 14, 2019



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
February 19, 2019



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES